Transit Planning 4 All

Inclusive Planning: A Path Toward Equity

August 31st, 2022

8:30-9:30am

Agenda

- Transit Planning 4 All (TP4A) Project Overview
- Inclusion: A Paradigm Shift
- Toolkits
  - Inclusive Planning Guide
  - Pathway to Inclusion
- Critical Issues & Successful Approaches
- Other Resources

Transit Planning 4 All Project

- Funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) of the Department of Health and Human Services since 2012.

- Promotes Inclusive Transportation Planning for Persons with Disabilities and Older Adults.

Project Partners

- Administered by Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)
  - Partners:
    - USAging
    - Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston
    - DJB Evaluation Consulting

Project Partners

Paradigm Shift

- Despite agencies best intentions, services still do not meet the needs of certain populations.

- When services are designed **by & with** the underserved population, the services are responsive to their needs.

Phase I: 2012-2017

"Research & Demonstration Program to Improve Coordinated Transportation Systems for People with Disabilities and Older Adults."

- Identified models used by states and communities to promote inclusive planning.
- Established which methods empowered people to be actively involved in the design and implementation of transit systems.
- Ensuring systems were responsive to their needs.

Phase II: 2017-2022

"Strengthening Coordinated Transportation Systems for People with Disabilities and Older Adults"

- 42 communities engaged in inclusive transportation planning.
- Technical Assistance, toolkits for replication; Inclusive Planning Guide, Pathway to Inclusion.
- Peer-to-peer mentoring groups.
- Launched TP4A website & Twitter.
- 3 grantees received funding to implement inclusive transit planning.

Mobility on Demand (MOD) Projects

- Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)- “Ride Now” Project
- Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS)- Metro-Atlanta
- Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Transportation Authority- Flagstaff

“Nothing about us – Without us”

Transit Planning

- Older adults and persons with disabilities have unique transportation needs.
- May not be effectively served by traditional public transit.

Transit Planning

- Transit planners may not be fully aware of the range of mobility needs, or the **barriers** and **challenges** for older adults and persons with disabilities.

- Traditional Paradigm: Systems & infrastructure are built *without* the guidance and direction from these populations.

- Resulting in exclusionary environments and disparate outcomes.

Awareness

- Mobility challenged individuals are acutely aware of their transportation barriers and challenges.
- Local agencies that empower community members to influence decision making have better services.
- Perhaps, they can lead the effort for change?

Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG)

- Mobility Liaisons project.
- Group of dedicated community members representing diverse populations in Portland, Maine.
- Empowered by GPCOG to influence decision making process.

"Inclusion refers to **how diversity is leveraged** to create a fair, equitable, healthy, and high-performing organization or community where all individuals are **respected, feel engaged and motivated,** and their contributions toward meeting organizational and societal goals are **valued.**"

Source: Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World

Barriers to Inclusion

Where do the barriers to inclusion exist?

- Agency Culture?
- Staff understanding of inclusion?
- Community distrust?
- Cultural expectation of roles?
- Language challenges?
- Others?

Examples of Barriers to Inclusion

- Space/materials that are not accessible
- Historical injustice and lack of trust
- Online collection of input that is not accessible
- Online forums that lack accessibility
- Lack of broad outreach
- Wrong messenger
- Lack of transportation to participate in planning activities
- Lack of pro-active consideration of needs of the community (e.g., interpreters, captioning, etc.)

What does it take to develop and maintain a culture of inclusion?

Creating an Inclusive Culture

Information and materials should feature people with disabilities & older adults.

Explicitly note engagement of persons with disabilities & older adults as essential to the planning process.

Pro-actively solicit and welcome accommodation requests.

Recognize and neutralize inequitable power dynamics across participants.

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Inclusive Planning Guide

- Built from the knowledge and experience gained from TP4A projects
  - Shared knowledge
  - Sensitive Design
  - Support for Implementation
  - Building Community Capacity

1) Explore

- Where are you starting from?
- Baseline measurement
  - What transit services exists in the community?
  - What barriers to inclusion exist in the community?
  - What needs do participants identify as most important to address?
  - Do participants feel included and valuable?

2) Design

- Define Success
  - All parties agree on what success is.
- Realistic Expectations
  - Building trust and shared commitments.
- Celebrate Success Along the Way.

3) Implement

- Invite Participation
  - Outreach activities, focus groups, community meetings.
- Smaller engagement from more committed members
  - Steering Committees, Advisory Groups, Mobility Liaisons.
  - Discuss policies, constraints, honest timeline.
- Accessibility
  - All meetings, communications must be accessible.
  - Ask about access needs and meet those needs.

4) Evaluate

- Evaluate Baseline.
- Establish Performance Measures.
- Create Logic Model that Link to Local Results.
- Monitor Perceptions.
- Track Inclusive Performance Over Time.
  - Pathway to Inclusion.
- Analyze.

5) Sustain

- Inclusion is a sustained and deliberate set of practices.
- Understand level of support for inclusive activities from:
  - Participants, internal and external actors.
- Understand the budget, staff resources, system capacity and institutional commitment.

Empowering Participants

- Seattle DOT “Ride Now” Steering Committee.
- Culture of inclusion where power sharing and participant decision making are fundamental.
- Compensating participants for expertise and time.

PATHWAY TO INCLUSION

Increased Trust

More Communication

More Inclusive

Level 5 Participants Share Decision Making

Level 4 Active Participant Involvement in Programs

Level 6 Participants Play Lead Roles

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Level 3 Consult Participants about Programs

Level 2 Inform Participants about Programs

Level 1 Programs Developed for Participants

Less Communication

Decreased Trust

Less Inclusive

Pathway Level 1

- Programs Developed for Participants.
- Little or no involvement of participants.
- Few programs are at Level 1 .
- Level 1 is a context.
- It is unlikely that any program will succeed without some participant inclusion.

Pathway Level 2

- Agencies inform participants about programs.
- Communication is one-way and hierarchical (from program to participants).

- **Purpose:** Communicate to stakeholders.
- Examples: Brochures, websites, emails, social media, community presentations by program staff or consultants.

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Pathway Level 3

- Programs engage individuals or groups in data collection methods.
- Consult participants about programs.

- **Purpose:** Collect feedback from participants about current services, unmet needs, and potential services.
- Examples: Surveys, focus groups, community meetings.

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Pathway Level 4

- Active participant involvement in programs.
- Participants, through steering committees or other activities, play active, meaningful roles in planning and program activities.

- **Purpose:** Build credibility, strengthen trust and communication, and expand resources.
- Examples: Participant led person-centered activities; participants review/design program materials.

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Pathway Level 5

- Participants share in the process of making decisions regarding planning and operations of programs.

- **Purpose:** Decision-making expands influence ("Nothing about us, without us").
- Examples: Participants consider program and policy alternatives, share influence in decision-making process.

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Pathway Level 6

- Participants Play Lead Roles!
- Individual participants (not representing partner organizations) take on leadership roles in program planning and operations.

- **Purpose:** Programs for people with disabilities and older adults led by participants.
- Examples: Participants assume responsibility for planning *and* carrying out project tasks.

PATHWAY TO INCLUSION

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More Inclusive

Level 5 Participants Share Decision Making

Level 4 Active Participant Involvement in Programs

Level 6 Participants Play Lead Roles

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Lower vs Higher Pathway Levels

- Lower levels (Levels 1-3) have less communication, decreased trust: less inclusive.
- Higher levels (Levels 4-6) have more communication, increased trust: more inclusive.
- Pathway is a continuum from lower levels to higher levels.
- At any given period of time, activities at different levels may be happening.
- The Pathway is not one way, it is continuous.

PATHWAY TO INCLUSION

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Active and Meaningful Inclusion

	Non-Meaningful Inclusion	Meaningful Inclusion
Non-Active Inclusion	• Not active. Not meaningful. • Little or no involvement of participants. • Programs serve participants with little or no input from, or perspectives of the populations being served. • Pathway: Level 1.	• Meaningful but not active inclusion. • Participant involvement is passive. • "In the room," not actively involved. • Well-intended programs gather useful, meaningful perspectives of participants (surveys or research). • Communication is one way. • Pathway: Levels 2, 3.
Active Inclusion	• Participants actively included, but do not feel they have an impact on decision-making, leadership, or outcomes. • May lead to "tokenism." • Participant involvement intermittent/temporary because active input not valued, influential, or does not produce results. • Pathway: Levels 2, 3, 4.	• **Participants are actively and meaningfully involved in planning.** • Participants play active role in program development, decision making, and leadership. • Participant feel their opinions are heard and make a difference. • Pathway: Some participants involved at Levels 4, 5, 6. Others may be involved at Levels 2, 3.

Assessing Overall Pathway Level

1. **TRACK** Inclusive Activities
2. **REVIEW** Inclusive Activities
3. **SCORE** Pathway Level Inclusively
4. **PLAN** for Inclusion
5. **REPORT** to Communicate & Educate

Creating Accessible Spaces

Are the opportunities to get involved in planning **sufficient**?

Are they **inclusive** of people with disabilities and older adults?

What Does This Look Like?

- Every project is different.
- More than “bring a seat to the table.”
- Results in active & meaningfully inclusion in transit planning.
- Steering Committee, Advisory Boards, Mobility Liaisons, Transit Buddies.

Inclusive Planning is Valuable

- **Transit Planners:** Federal statutes require public participation in planning transit projects.
  - Many transit agencies are going beyond traditional public meetings to embrace more inclusive strategies

- **Persons living with a disability:** involvement is central to full inclusion in community life.

- **Older Adults:** Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) services are guided by community engagement processes to determine needs in each community.

Successful Approaches

- “Giving up power is a fundamental part of inclusion.”
- Recognize expertise.
- Acknowledge contributions.
- Do not assume satisfaction.
- Track ideas and solutions.
- Go beyond your own comfort level.
- Never assume you have reached everyone who could contribute!

Successful Approaches

- Understand and recognize Participant and Partner/Stakeholder roles.
- Evolving nature of Steering Committee members & roles.
- Focus groups need significant expertise
- Town halls & community meetings that invite open dialogue.
- Be Open, Honest & Accountable.

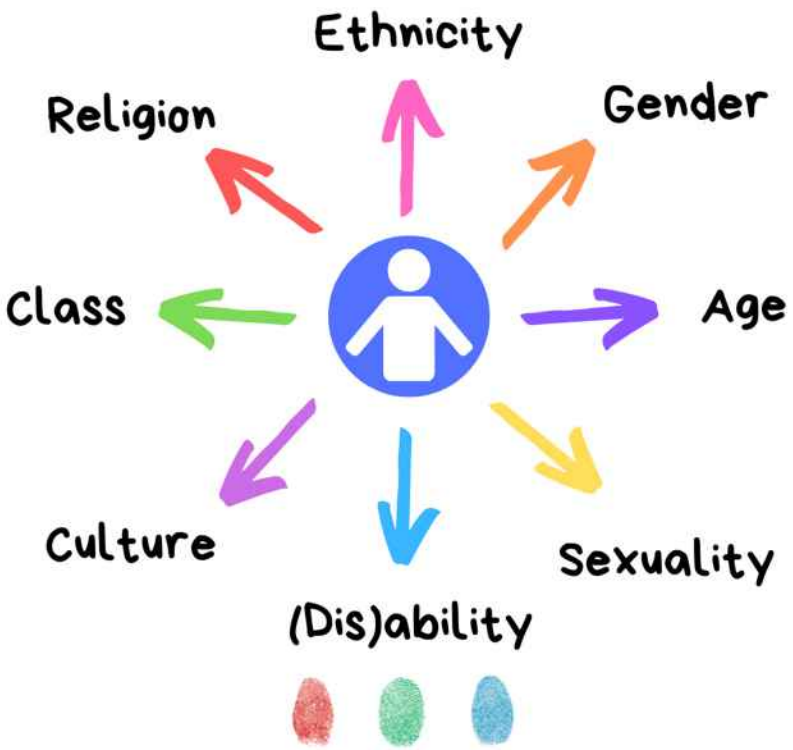
“Our decisions about transportation determine much more than where roads or bridges or tunnels or rail lines will be built.

They determine the connections and barriers that people will encounter in their daily lives - and thus how hard or easy it will be for people to get where they need and want to go."

-Elijah Cummings

INCLUSION & INTERSECTIONALITY

Inclusion & Intersectionality: Identity Beyond A Label



Intersectionality highlights each individual's uniqueness based on various identity markers.

Inclusion invites individuals to show up as their full and authentic selves and embraces multiple identities.

Intersectional Approaches to Inclusion

- Explore intersectional and qualitative data.
- Work towards equity.
- Improve cultural and linguistic competence.
- Adapt to the communities being served.
- Leverage partnerships.
- Encourage participants to bring others into the room!

Inclusion Requires Shifting of Power

- Do you just have diverse faces at the table?
- Do they have influence or decision making power?
- Do they have a voice in organizational culture?
- Can they shift and direct budgets?
- Can they say “yes” or “no” to things?

Toolkits

- **Website:** transitplanning4all.org
  - Inclusive Planning Guide
  - Pathway to Inclusion
  - Project Videos
  - Virtual Roundtables
    - Partnerships
    - Communication
    - Engagement Strategies
    - Measuring Success
  - TP4A Resource Library
    - GPCOG Handbook- Mobility Liaison Project
    - USDOT Transportation Toolkit
  - Twitter: @TransitPlanning

Questions?

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